

Short-Term Mission and Global Awareness Trip—Washington, DC

Guiding Principles

1. **Approach:** Guided by the Franciscan tradition of “ministry of presence” and embracing a “preferential option for the poor” we strive to see reality, and particularly economic reality, from the perspective of those experiencing economic poverty. The guiding principle for our immersion trip is to provide students with experiences that will place them in direct contact with the economically poor—looking at life through their eyes, seeing reality from their vantage point, and approaching daily realities as they might.
2. **Experience:** We value and seek a deeper understanding of the perspectives of people working at the grassroots level for social change and of those who shape the local communities in Washington, DC. We recognize that, while there is much to learn from local people as experts, these individuals and their realities are not often the focus of other trips to Washington, DC. We endeavor to provide students with a means to make their lives and work known.
3. **Reflect:** Our approach and philosophy is based on the model of group learning and reflection. Through regularly-scheduled sessions, students will take time for personal reflection and will share their observations, reactions, and responses to the daily activities with other participants in small and large group settings.

Goals

1. **Develop social and cultural awareness:** To build intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical awareness of the root causes and realities of poverty in the United States and work with local agencies that serve the economically poor.
 - FMS staff will facilitate a welcoming workshop on Washington, DC cultural history and current demographics.
 - Students will participate in educational and service activities with 3-6 Washington, DC area organizations during the trip.
2. **Grow in faith with a particular understanding of Franciscan charism:** To engage students in a faith-based experience of service and learning so as to advance their spiritual growth and understanding of the Church’s fundamental option for the poor.
 - Students will gain perspective on the role of the Church in promoting social change and will be introduced to faith-based initiatives in Washington, DC.
 - Students will participate in daily prayer and reflection to help deepen their spiritual lives. This reflection time will provide students with opportunities to better discern their responsibility as Christians in shaping God’s kingdom on earth.
 - FMS staff will facilitate a closing ceremony as a spiritual capstone for the trip.
3. **Mission advocacy and commitment to service:** To prepare students to effectively share about their experience and the social realities encountered in Washington, DC upon returning to their home communities. Students will deepen their commitment to service and be inspired to respond to the needs of God’s people in their home communities.
 - Students will meet together at regular intervals throughout the trip to discuss, debrief, and process what they are learning and experiencing.

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- Students will be encouraged to engage in a service activity of their choice where they live so that they can put to use the mission awareness skills and knowledge they have acquired while visiting Washington, DC.
4. **Build community through shared experiences:** To create an understanding of the value of serving others by sharing their lives with the people they encounter, including other trip participants. Particular emphasis will be placed on ministry of presence and the value of “being” with people. Students will learn why this is an important component of any ministry or service.
 - FMS staff will facilitate a welcoming workshop highlighting differences between “ministry of presence” and “ministry of service” designed to prepare students for the various service, educational, and reflection components of the trip.
 - Students will be challenged to approach all trip components—including transportation, meals, service, reflection, etc.—with a spirit of openness to engage with those around them.
 - Free time will be incorporated each day for personal reflection, rest, fellowship, and preparation for upcoming activities.
 5. **Deepen understanding of issues of poverty:** To develop students’ awareness of the complex causes and varied experiences of poverty in the Washington, DC area through service ministries, educational workshops, and personal encounters.
 - Hands-on service will be done at a variety of organizations working to meet the needs of communities in the greater DC area.
 - Students will engage in structured learning workshops as well as informal conversations and experiences throughout the week that focus on poverty and interrelated issues such as homelessness, food security, access to affordable housing, and healthcare for vulnerable communities.

Scheduling

1. **Morning prayer and prep for daily activities:** Students will lead morning prayer with FMS staff participation. After prayer, FMS staff and group leaders will brief students on the day’s activities. This will include an explanation of where we will be going, what we will be doing, what to bring/not to bring, as well as the objectives for the day’s activities.
2. **Student learning components—reflection and debrief:** Each day a deliberate time of reflection and debrief will be led by FMS staff. As one of the most important components of the trip, daily reflection time provides opportunities for all students to reflect on the day’s experiences, their own observations and personal encounters, as well as shared group experiences and learning.
3. **Workshops:** Students will be given 2-3 educational workshops on various topics which will help them contextualize and form purposeful reflective judgment in areas such as ministry of presence, ministry of service, social analysis, Catholic Social Thought, or another topic that relates specifically to the group’s interests. FMS staff and/or representatives from partner organizations will lead the workshops.
4. **Cultural activities:** Groups will have a day to explore Washington, DC on their own. If needed, FMS staff can provide information on visiting the National Mall monuments and memorials, Smithsonian museums, Library of Congress, etc.

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Logistics

1. **Housing:** Participants, students and chaperones, will stay at Franciscan Mission Service’s “Casa San Salvador” Community House. Groups will be responsible for purchasing and preparing their own meals. Franciscan Mission Service will provide the evening meal on arrival day as well as food needed for the ice cream social.
2. **Transportation:** Groups will be responsible for their own transportation to/from Washington, DC as well as transportation needed for the various activity and service sites. Franciscan Mission Service will provide a staff guide to each service site and any other activity during the trip that would require a guide.

Potential Community Engagement, Service, and Workshops

1. **Capital Area Food Bank:** Spend the day doing hands-on service supporting the region’s largest hunger relief organization.
2. **Catholic Charities Spanish Catholic Center:** Learn about providing culturally-appropriate healthcare to those most in need in the diverse Columbia Heights neighborhood of NW Washington, DC.
3. **Christ House:** Visit the health care recovery facility for men experiencing homelessness and learn about Christ House’s healthcare model and permanent housing components. Opportunities for service and time with patients are also incorporated.
4. **Franciscan Action Network (FAN):** Visit FAN headquarters and Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns and learn how these entities are advocating for the poor on national and international levels.
5. **Gift of Peace Convent and Hospice:** Spend time with the Missionaries of Charity at their hospice for the terminally ill performing a variety of service tasks to help the sisters in the daily running of the house as well as spend time with patients.
6. **Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Office:** Participate in a workshop on becoming advocates for change.
7. **Seventh District Soup Kitchen:** Assist the Missionaries of Charity in preparing lunch at their soup kitchen.
8. **Shepherd’s Table:** Working in small groups, students will do hands-on service supporting the downtown Silver Spring, MD social service organization.
9. **SOME (So Others Might Eat):** Participate in a variety of SOME programs such as visiting seniors through the homebound senior program, leading social activities at the Kuehner Senior Center, or preparing/serving a meal in the dining room.
10. **St. Camillus Food Pantry:** Spend an afternoon organizing and shelving food items at a food bank which is supported and run by parishioners of a local Franciscan Parish.
11. **Street Sense:** Engage with Street Sense staff and vendors to experience a valuable view of DC through the shared experiences and perspectives of those experiencing homelessness.
12. **Walking Tour of DC:** A facilitated walk through the poorest and wealthiest parts of town. What students observe—the sights, the smells, the sounds—set the foundation for the trip and are put into context throughout the week.
13. **Workshop Examples:**
 - Advocacy concepts and applications
 - Catholic Social Teaching
 - Ministry of presence and ministry of service
 - Social analysis process

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Sample Schedule

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
7:00	Travel to Washington, DC	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	
		Prayer	Prayer	Prayer	Prayer	Prayer	Prayer	
8:00		Prepare for day	Prepare for day	Travel to site	Prepare for day	Prepare for day	Visit the National Mall, Smithsonian Museums, etc.	Departure preparations
		Travel to site						Workshop 3
9:00		Christ House (lunch with patients at 12:30pm)	Street Sense Panel	Catholic Charities Spanish Catholic Center Clinic	Shepherd's Table	Travel to site		
10:00								Lunch
11:00			Travel to site					
12:00			Lunch provided	bag lunch	bag lunch	bag lunch		
1:00		The NW Center Service Ministry	ECO City Farm	Capital Area Food Bank	La Clinica del Pueblo	Visit the National Mall, Smithsonian Museums, etc.		Travel Home
2:00								
3:00	Arrival/ get settled	Travel to FMS	Travel to FMS	Travel to FMS	Travel to FMS			
	Workshop 1: Welcome & Orientation							
4:00	Free time / grocery shopping	Dinner prep/ free time	Dinner prep/ free time	Dinner prep/ free time	Dinner prep/ free time			
5:00							Prayer	
6:00	Dinner provided by FMS	Reflection	Reflection	Reflection	Reflection		Dinner out in Washington, DC	
7:00	Ice cream social w/Casa community							
8:00		Free time	Free time	Free time	Free time			
9:00	Free time	QT/Lights Out	QT/Lights Out	QT/Lights Out	QT/Lights Out		QT/Lights Out	
10:00	QT/Lights Out							

Travel	Cultural Activity
Free Time	Community Engagement
Workshops	Prayer
Meals	Quiet time/Lights out
Reflection	Prep for Days Activities